

teaching and washing clear and central in your assemblies?' This is the subject of the WCC Ditchingham Ordo, which Lathrop helped to compile. Another concern in the third part, Holy People, is inculturation of the liturgy. The use of water in baptism is use of cultural/symbolic material from the environment. This, Lathrop suggests, proposes a model for ongoing cultural dialogue of Christian worship. The eucharistic meal, too, expresses use of the materials of culture, and the rites reflect diversity of cultures. Here Lathrop is responding to the Lutheran World Federation report, *Worship and Culture Dialogue*.

This is an extremely well-written study, with some fresh insights and challenging questions. At times it is uncertain whether the historical discussion is normative, or WCC papers, or LWF reports, or Lathrop's previous book. There is also some muddle over inclusivity in the assembly and its holiness. Thus on the one hand we are told that women and men, young and old, rich and poor are all included, but amongst these is suddenly thrust the North American obsession with homosexuality. This fits ill with a chapter on holiness. For many assemblies, open and public practice of the latter is tantamount to unholiness, and reason for exclusion from the assembly. This apart, we are grateful to Lathrop for this work.

BRYAN D. SPINKS (*Yale University*)

*Act and Being. Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology.*

By DIETRICH BONHOEFFER. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pp xi + 237. £20. (*Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Vol. 2)

*Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible.* By DIETRICH BONHOEFFER. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pp. xi + 218. £20. (*Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Vol. 5)

The appearance of these two volumes heralds the start of one of the most ambitious and painstaking theological translation projects in modern times: a completely new English-language edition of the entire works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, based on the new, seventeen-volume definitive German edition now being completed by Kaiser Christian Verlag. The translation is being directed by an Editorial Board of the English-speaking section of the International Bonhoeffer Society, under the overall editorship of Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr, and Clifford Green.

Why a new English version of Bonhoeffer now, when so much of his work has already been familiar in English for many years? The reasons are several and add up to a compelling case. The earlier process of translation was undertaken by a variety of translators and publishers,

mostly in complete independence of each other, resulting in some marked inconsistencies in the rendering of Bonhoeffer; and the accuracy of translation, especially in the more technical works, at times left something to be desired. Furthermore, certain of those earlier versions were in turn based on German texts which more recent Bonhoeffer scholarships has shown to be suspect in terms of completeness, finality and the ordering of the material. The now definitive *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke*, edited by a team of Bonhoeffer specialists including Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's closest friend and biographer, thus amply merits an English edition.

There is also the matter of style. While Bonhoeffer cannot, without violence to his historicity, be removed entirely from his context and culture of over half a century ago and made to sound like a politically-correct person of today, it is the case that at times some of the previous English versions unnecessarily create a barrier for a contemporary readership. For example, in his native German he was by no means as gender-exclusive as he has often been made to sound in English.

Finally, while much of Bonhoeffer has appeared in English, much has not. There is an abundance of sermons, lectures to his students in the illegal seminary at Finkenwalde, letters to family, friends and colleagues, which still lie only in German. Whether for historical study of the German Church Struggle and the resistance, or for exploring further Bonhoeffer's theology, or for the sheer biographical interest in his extraordinary life and death, the time is surely ripe to harvest completely and consistently the results of the German editors' scholarship.

*Act and Being* (German, *Akt und sein*) was Bonhoeffer's second (*Habilitation*) doctoral thesis, written in Berlin in 1930 and published the following year. Like his first thesis *Sanctorum Communio*, it is a bold excursus into the borderland between systematic theology and philosophy and is probably the most technically challenging of all his books. Here, Bonhoeffer plunges into the debates, especially lively in 1920s Germany, about the Kantian legacy. Is the proper response to Kant an acknowledgement that philosophy has its limits, cannot know the 'thing-in-itself', and therefore should leave a space for revelation? Or, with Hegel and his idealist inheritance, to assert the all-embracing, systematising claims of reason which draws everything into itself? Bonhoeffer trenchantly critiques the idealist approach as an intellectual version of what Luther diagnosed as the *cor incurvum in se*, allowing no room for real Otherness. Bonhoeffer, it is sometimes alleged, was never a really original thinker, his claims to fame largely resting on the dramas of his life. *Act at Being*, wrestling so freely and determinedly with Heidegger and Grisebach, Barth and Bultmann to name but a few, and seeking above all to locate the concrete encounter with revelation in

and through the community of the Church, more than answers this charge. It still has much to say today, not least in the debates about 'realist' versus 'non-objective' views of God which periodically distract Anglo-Saxon theology.

It might also be argued that no amount of re-translation will make such an academically daunting work more accessible. But Martin Rumscheidt has produced a text of tauntness and vigour which well conveys the young Bonhoeffer's passionate quest for a new way for theology in the world. Moreover, the real treasure for most readers will be the prolific editorial footnotes, both those of the German editor Hans-Richard Reuter and the editor of this edition, Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr. The copious explanations of key technical terms and of the relation of Bonhoeffer's arguments to his many contemporary sources, will be an invaluable resource. Floyd also supplies a helpful introduction setting *Act and Being* in intellectual and historical context, and the volume concludes with a translation of the German editor's afterword. This editorial pattern will mark the whole series of translations.

By contrast to *Act and Being*, *Life Together* (German, *Gemeinsames Leben*) is not only one of Bonhoeffer's shortest books but has long been one of his most popular, enjoyed and loved by readers of all traditions. Written in 1938 immediately after the closure of the Finkenwalde seminary by the Gestapo, it comes straight out of his three-year experiment in community life with ordinants and Confessing Church pastors in his 'House of Brethren'. Its appeal lies in the realism and concreteness of its perception of what community means in common worship, meditation, confession, and mutual service and 'bearing each other'. This down-to-earthness, however, is not to be mistaken for theological simplistics. Beneath it all lies the same concern as in *Sanctorum Communio* and *Act and Being* for Otherness—the *extra nos* nature of Christ as met in brother and sister—to be taken with utmost seriousness. Equally, it demands that the subtle (often very religious) ways of evading or dominating the other person be disclosed and confronted. Here again, in this version translated by Daniel W. Bloesch and James H. Burtness, and edited by Geoffrey Kelly, the editorial introduction and notes are highly useful, not least for example in clarifying Bonhoeffer's difficult if crucial distinction between community as either a *psychische* or a *pneumatische* reality. In addition, they uncover the rich and wide range of biblical sources, devotional literature and hymnody, both from his rich Lutheran heritage and beyond, upon which Bonhoeffer drew. That is an education in itself. For Bonhoeffer the Psalter formed the core of his own spirituality from the time he heard the daily offices in the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield till his last lonely days in prison. The addition to this volume of *Prayerbook of the Bible*, his

reflections on a 'theological' reading of the Psalms in the church, is therefore an appropriate bonus.

I have to confess to an undying affection for the first English version of *Life Together* translated by John W. Doberson. My dog-eared copy bearing the student coffee-stains of thirty-five years ago bears witness to how it arrested me then, and as with the King James Bible, I will always hear its cadences. But I would have no hesitation whatever in commending this new version to those wishing to make a start with Bonhoeffer. May that be true of the whole series as well.

KEITH CLEMENTS (*Geneva*)

*Karl Barth and the Theology of the Lord's Supper.* By PAUL D. MOLNAR. New York: Peter Lang, 1996. Pp. x + 333. £26.00.

In the introduction to the *Church Dogmatics* IV/4. Fragment, Karl Barth recorded that time had not permitted him to treat the Lord's Supper, but intelligent readers could deduce how he would finally have presented his theology on this topic. Professor Molnar has taken up this challenge, and presents both the framework and substance of Barth's teaching on this ordinance. He thus begins with Barth's *analogia fidei* and his rejection of natural theology. The corollary of this is that approaches to the sacraments as found in Rahner with 'Symbol', and Moltmann with 'meals' fail to fit Barth's basic starting point.

What is traditionally called sacraments are part and parcel of Barth's doctrine of God, the Trinity and Christology. His rejection of the term sacrament for the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper is consistent with his rejection of any identity between Creator and creation, even in the person of Christ. The mystery of God is precisely that—hence his rejection of the identity (as in Rahner) of the immanent and economic Trinity, of the identity between the humanity and divinity of Christ and the mutually conditioning view of the *communicatio idiomatum*, and the identity of Christ the Head with the body, the Church. The term sacrament for Barth can only be applied to the mystery of God in the incarnation. Because Barth consistently rejected parity, disparity and synthesis, when dealing with baptism and the Lord's Supper he rejected any idea of theologies of water or of bread and wine because God is not inherent in created reality (but what of Mozart's music?!). Barth rejected the idea of elements being instruments of grace, instead preferring a 'neo-Zwinglian' position where the ordinances are an obedient response to grace. According to Molnar, Barth argued that the manifestation of grace is entirely dependent upon God's free actualisation of his sovereign power to be present. God